



## Bureau of Parks & Lands

### Policy Statement

### Geocaching

With the development of handheld electronic GPS devices (which can determine geographic positions accurately to within a few feet of a specific location), a new outdoor recreational activity is emerging. In this activity, known as “geocaching,” participants usually assemble a plastic box containing finder logs and small prizes, and place those boxes in public locations, noting those locations using handheld GPS units. They then post the location of the cache on the Internet, and other participants try to find the cache using their own GPS units. When a cache is found, the finder is asked to make an entry in the cache log, and can exchange the gift for another. The cache is then left for the next participant. A sample geocache posting is included with this policy.

Parks, historic sites, and other public places are popular locations for placing geocaches. This is often done with no notice to or permission from the agency operating the facility. Park personnel may often become aware of a geocache placement by unusual off-trail activity, information provided by park visitors, or through Internet postings.

While the bureau recognizes geocaching as a legitimate outdoor recreational activity, there may be times when this activity places the resource or the public at risk, such as:

- when a cache posting encourages wheeled vehicle access in violation of posted rules;
- when the placement of a cache involves ground disturbance, especially in a restricted area;
- when the placement of a cache encourages illegal or inappropriate use; or
- when a cache causes the development of rogue trails or other resource affecting issues.

To deal with these issues, the following policy regulates geocaching activity on Maine State Parks and Historic Sites.

Geocaching activities on Maine State Parks and Historic Sites will be allowed in compliance with posted rules and regulations. The placement of geocache containers on park properties will be permitted so long as park resources are not endangered or degraded as a result of geocaching activities. Should park managers determine that geocaching activities are causing resource degradation or violation of rules, the following action may be taken:

Geocaches may be removed by staff; and Managers may post messages to the geocache site notifying others that the cache has been removed.

Park Managers may also remove, without notice, any geocache that has apparently been abandoned on park property or left unused for a long period.

The removal of any geocache from park property by staff should be reported on an Incident Report Form.

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Enacted as policy March 28, 2002